

JULIA BODLEY ACTON



Julia Bodley Acton was born in San Jose, California, February 28, 1866, and died at the home of her brother in that city, June 27, 1931, being 65 years and four months of age.

The sterling character of Sister Acton is accounted for in part by her ancestry, and in fuller measure by the impartation of grace as a result of her beautiful consecration and deep piety.

She was of Revolutionary stock, being descended from Major William Bodley who served with General Washington, and was at Valley Forge.

Her father, Thomas Bodley, was born in Kentucky in 1821, and her mother, Julia Ann McCabe, was born in Missouri and crossed the plains as a child of eleven with her father, P. T. McCabe.

This heritage from the Pioneers came out in her unflagging devotion to duty and her cheerful, sacrificial service for others. No more winsome or cheerful Christian ever lived than Mrs. Julia Acton, and no task was too •difficult for her to undertake.

Julia Bodley was educated in the public schools of San Jose and received her diploma to teach from the State College (then the State Normal School) in San Jose in May, 1885. After teaching for some years in the rural schools of Santa Clara County she accepted a position as Deputy City Assessor and Clerk of San Jose, in which position she earned for herself a high place in the esteem of the citizens of San Jose.

This regard never ceased and when she returned to San Jose to make her home after thirty years' absence she was welcomed joyously by her friends and associates of those years.

On October 27, 1899, she was married in her home church in San Jose to Rev. William Acton, then serving the Lakeport, charge. The church had been beautifully decorated and the wedding was one of the outstanding events in social circles that tall. The service was read by Rev. C. B. Riddick, Presiding Elder of the San Francisco District, assisted by Rev. J. E. Squires, the pastor. The San Jose papers of that date gave an extended account of this wedding.

Rev. William Acton was born in England, and came to California on a sailing vessel around Cape Horn, when a child of five.

Brother and Sister Acton served with signal success the churches at Lakeport, Selma, Petaluma, Modesto and Salinas.

At the session of the Pacific Conference held in 1910, they were appointed to have charge of the Oriental Work on the Pacific Coast. This was a wonderfully happy appointment, as Brother Acton had cherished a Missionary spirit from the beginning, and had, at one time applied to the Missionary Board to be sent out as a Foreign Missionary, but on account of financial difficulties the Board was unable to grant this request.

Sister Acton threw herself into this work with her husband whole heartedly and together they built an imperishable monument in the hearts of these people with whom they lived with a very rare and beautiful devotion.

The writer first became acquainted with Sister Acton when he was appointed to the pastorate in Oakland in 1920. She was then living in Berkeley and it was a joy to visit her home frequently where she ministered with a tender devotion to her invalid mother.

In the early Spring of 1925 the mother passed into her eternal home, after which Brother and Sister Acton moved to San Francisco. Brother Acton did not long survive, but on October 3, 1925, he fell asleep in Jesus, and she who had been so occupied with an invalid mother and a suffering husband, found her hands strangely empty. She could not long endure this, for she had never known idleness, so she volunteered for visitation and secretarial work in the San Francisco Church, where she was a tower of strength to her pastors.

But years of strain had told on her and she was soon incapacitated by high blood pressure. She fought on as long as possible, but finally had to admit, reluctantly, that she could go on no longer, and she retired to a very quiet life.

In 1930 she returned to San Jose to make her home with her brother, Thomas Bodley, who is Tax Collector for the County of Santa Clara. She brought her membership back to her home church and attended when able. She was always an inspiration to her pastor, and just to see her in the congregation made him feel a little more like preaching.